Shenandoah River Bridge
Spanning the North Fork of the
Shenandoah River on Virginia State Route 767
9 mile east of the town of Quicksburg
and .7 mile west of the Valley Turnpike
Quicksburg Vicinity
Shenandoah County
Virginia

HAER No. VA-52

HAER VA 86-QUIKBN, 1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Shenandoah River Bridge

HAER No. VA-52

Location:

Spanning the North Fork of the Shenandoah River on Virginia State Route 767,

.9 mile east of the town of Quicksburg and .7 mile west of the Valley Turnpike

Quicksburg vicinity, Shenandoah County, Virginia

UTM: 17.703180.4284800 Quad: New Market, Virginia

Date of Construction: 1916; moved to present location in 1936

Fabricator:

Virginia Bridge and Iron Company of Roanoke, Virginia

Present Owner:

Virginia Department of Transportation

1401 East Broad Street Richmond, Virginia 23219

Significance:

The Shenandoah River Bridge is a good example of a riveted steel modified

Camelback truss.

Project Information:

This documentation was undertaken in May 1990 under contract with the

Virginia Department of Transportation as a mitigative measure prior to the

removal and disposal of the bridge.

Luke Boyd Historian A

Archaeological Research Center Virginia Commonwealth University

Richmond, Virginia

History of the Shenandoah River Bridge and Crossing

The bridge is located on Route 767 over the North Fork of the Shenandoah River in gently rolling farm country. It is approximately seven-tenths of a mile west of the Valley Turnpike, U. S. Route 1, and nine tenths of a mile east of the town of Quicksburg. Quicksburg is located in a triangle formed by the larger towns of Mount Jackson to the northeast, Forestville to the northwest, and New Market to the south. The bridge gives the area in this triangle access to the Valley Turnpike midway between Mount Jackson and New Market.

This area began to be settled in the early seventeen hundreds by industrious German, and later Scotch-Irish, immigrants attracted to the what is probably some of the richest farm land in the state. New Market had been established in the last quarter of the eighteenth century at the crossing of several Indian trails and between 1800 and 1855 had grown to become a manufacturing center for that portion of the Shenandoah Valley. Mount Jackson also dated to the eighteenth century. Originally known as Mount Pleasant, it was incorporated under the name Mount Jackson in 1826 and its growth is attributed to its being the terminus of the Valley Division of the old stage route which carried passengers and mail up the valley (Moore and Miller 1931: 13). Forestville dates to the 1830's and began as a store and tavern on what was then known as the Alexandria-Tennessee Road (Wayland 1927: 168). It is Quicksburg's location in this triangle which led to its growth and development as a small economic center for the immediate area when a railroad depot was established there just after the Civil War (Wine 1984: 40). As it became established as a convenient alternative shipping and receiving point to Mount Jackson or New Market, a bridge was placed at the present crossing to afford access to the Valley Turnpike. This in turn enlarged the geographical area the town served and furthered its growth.

The railroad which gave birth to Quicksburg complimented two earlier transportation routes: the Shenandoah River and the Valley Turnpike. The Shenandoah Navigation Company had been chartered in 1798 by the General Assembly of Virginia (Wayland 1976: 9). Flatboats were floated down the Shenandoah from Port Republic on the South Fork, and from as far up as Plains Mill on the North Fork, to the Potomac River at Harper's Ferry, and then onto Georgetown and Alexandria. Early roads in Virginia, as elsewhere, were neither smooth, solid or well graded. The "Great Road" of the Shenandoah Valley followed an old Indian trail, and although heavily traveled by settlers in wagons, was very rough and rocky. The Shenandoah River provided the fastest, smoothest, most economical means of shipping large amounts of agricultural goods to Alexandria. Each of the rafts were capable of carrying up to 10 tons of grain, apples, lumber, and the like. The lumber used to make the raft was sold at the end of the trip and the boatmen required to walk home.

The Valley Turnpike Company had been organized as early as 1817, but through difficulties was not successfully pursued until 1834, when it was rechartered under the same name and authorized to build a pike from Winchester to Harrisonburg, and later extended to Staunton. The 92 mile Valley Pike was in large part an upgrading and extension of the "Great Road" in the northern portion of the Valley. It was completed in 1840 at a cost of 425,000 dollars. 3/5 of the amount was provided through subscriptions by progressive farmers and businessmen along the route, and the rest came from state funds. There were toll gates along the pike at five mile intervals where a fee was paid for

the road. The road was macadamized in the 1840's and allowed for a smooth ride at 6 to 7 miles-per-hour (Wayland 1976: 9).

Against the wishes of the officers of the Valley Turnpike and the teamsters and stage drivers who worked it, the Orange, Alexandria and Manassas Gap Railroad reached Strasburg via Front Royal by October of 1854 (Wayland 1976: 399). The first passenger train reached Mount Jackson in March of 1859 (Wayland 1927: 293). The railroad was surveying and beginning to grade the line on to Forestville when the Civil War stopped all progress. Because the railroad did not go any further up Valley than Strasburg, the Valley Turnpike proved to be of great strategic importance to both the Union and Confederate Armies during the Civil War. Not only was it the primary pipeline to the agricultural produce of the Shenandoah Valley, but it was of vital importance for the rapid movement of soldiers and armaments (Wayland 1984: 138). Stonewall Jackson twice hauled locomotives over the turnpike with horses from Martinsburg, West Virginia to the rail line at Strasburg, where they were sent to eastern Virginia over the Orange, Alexandria and Manassas Gap Railroad (Wayland 1976: 399). Probably all of the wooden covered bridges in the northern Shenandoah Valley were destroyed at sometime during the Civil War. During and after the Battle of New Market, both sides ordered bridges burnt. The covered bridge over the North Fork of the Shenandoah River south of Mount Jackson was burned by the Union Army as it retreated down the Valley so as to halt pursuing Confederate artillery (Ibid: 364).

After the war, rafts, or gondolas continued to be used to move goods to Alexandria until the bridges could be rebuilt and the rail lines extended. Some farmers, out of respect for tradition, continued to use the Shenandoah River to move their produce until the 1880's (Wayland 1927: 349).

The Orange, Alexandria and Manassas Gap Railroad finally reached what is now Quicksburg in 1868. A short time later the line was taken over by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Clower 1984: 25). The rail-stop was originally known as "Forest Station" by the railroad (Wine 1982: 30). The stop was located in a heavily wooded area at the edges of two large farms. The land to the east was part of a 550 acre tract known as "Edgehill," built by James Madison Hite Beale. This had been part of an original grant made to Daniel Holeman in 1750. The property was called "Moore Plantation," after the owner, Samuel Moore, who purchased the property from Beale in 1846 Ibid: 53). The rail-stop was known by the locals as "Moore's Crossing" because the road to Moore's farm crossed the tracks there (lbid: 40). The land to the west had been owned by a man living south of Staunton named Steigel. He gave the property to his daughter when she married William A. Quick. The Quicks built a home on the property between 1840 and 50 that they called "Boiling Springs." Quick was a prominent justice of the peace and an active proponent for the creation of a village at "Moore's Crossing" (Wayland 1927: 169). He built a depot and store on his land west of the tracks. This quickly attracted local farmers. His store carried creditable goods and did a thriving business (Wine 1982: 43). Freight and express services rapidly increased as many of the farmers, due to newly established hikes in the toll rates on the Valley Turnpike, did their shipping and shopping in Quicksburg rather than Mount Jackson or New Market. A post office was established at the crossing in 1872 which was called "Forest Station" (Ibid: 40).

The road running east from the town through Moore's Plantation to the crossing was realigned in 1874. It ran straight from the southern edge of the town to the west bank of

the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. This crossing was fordable only in the late summer. At this time a substantially built wooden foot bridge was built across the river for year-round foot traffic. On the opposite, east, bank of the river was Neff's mill, and the bridge was generally known as "the bridge at Neff's mill" (Ibid). By spanning the river, the bridge widened the geographic area that could conveniently make use of the the depot and stores at Forest Station.

William Quick, either out of vanity or because he felt the local residents were ungrateful for the depot and store he had built, refused to have anything further to do with promoting the growth of the town unless the name was changed to "Quicksburgh" in his honor (Wayland 1927: 169). On March 6, 1877, the name of the post office was officially changed to Quicksburgh [the "h" was dropped in 1892] (Wine 1982: 40).

That following November, a freshet 20 feet above common level washed away many of the bridges, mills, and outbuildings on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Included among the bridges washed away were the foot bridge at Neff's mill, the General Meem's covered bridge to the north, and the New Market covered bridge to the south (Ibid: 228 and Wayland 1927: 364). On January 23, 1878, a meeting was held in Quicksburg for the purpose of taking the necessary steps for constructing a covered bridge at Neff's mill similar to one spanning the river south of Mount Jackson. The bridge was to be between 160 and 180 feet and estimated to cost 2,500 dollars (Wine 1982: 41). The replacement of the Meem's bottom and New Market bridges, and the building of a bridge at Neff's mill in 1879, put four bridges over a seven mile stretch of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. There were covered bridges at Mount Jackson; Meem's Bottom; Quicksburg, and New Market (Ibid: 59). Ten years later, in May 1889, flood waters 16 feet above common level caused a large tree to crash into the center of the bridge at Neff's mill and washed it away. Construction of a new bridge began the following October (Ibid: 41). The structural system of the covered bridges in the area were probably similar to the Burr truss, kingpost arch, covered bridge still standing at Meem's Bottom. It consists of massive curved, ship lapped beams bolted together with iron rods to form two great wooden arches spanning the entire distance between the abutments. The abutments were constructed of gray, coursed ashlar limestone native to the Valley.

Sometime during this period, the road from Quicksburg to Neff's mill was cobbled with river rocks. It became locally famous as the roughest road in the area as both horse drawn vehicles and automobiles were required to travel slowly across it. In 1929 the road was rebuilt and paved (Ibid: 176-7).

In March 1883, the railroad depot in Quicksburg was deemed inadequate to handle the freight and the Richmond Terminal Company, which had purchased the B&O's interest in the line in 1881, threatened to discontinue stopping at the village unless improvements were made for the loading and unloading of freight. Many local residents criticized Quick's eldest daughter, Nannie, for the lack of proper facilities. She responded that although the depot had been built by her father on his property, it was no longer private, being used by almost everybody in the area, and was therefore not her responsibility. Improvements were eventually made and by 1901 between 36 and 44 trains passed the station every 24 hours. At that time, the village was located north of the crossing, but land became available for developing to the south and business began shifting. In 1888, the town had a depot (now served by the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company), 14

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dwellings, three stores, a school house, a Methodist Church, and a newspaper, The Quicksburgh Times (Ibid: 41). The town continued to grow with the additions of a saddle shop (1890), a butter factory (1896), a cannery (1902), a barrel factory and flour mill (1909).

A new depot, one hundred yards south of the crossing, was completed in June 1912, and was kept busy for 65 years. The local mill regularly dispatched large quantities of feed by rail, and area farmers used the station for shipping livestock, pulp wood, grain and apples. They received coal and produce. It was a passenger station until January 4, 1948, when the last run of the Southern Railway passenger train was made between Harrisonburg and Manassas (Ibid: 43).

Prior to 1932, each of Virginia's counties was responsible for constructing and maintaining their own roads. Each county normally had road boards for each of its districts which were responsible for making recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors (Clower 1984: 80). The current State Shenandoah River Bridge was in Shenandoah County's Lee District on what was then County Route 262. In July of 1932, the Virginia Department of Highways took responsibility for the highway system from the individual counties. On March 23, 1935, the covered bridge at Neff's mill was deemed unsafe and closed to traffic (Wayland 1984: 79).

The state decided to let out a contract for the replacement of the wooden bridge with a steel truss recently removed from another crossing three miles north. This was common practice in Virginia in the 1930's and 40's. Secondary roads were regularly upgraded with trusses that were being replaced on primary roads with concrete bridges (Brock 1990: personal communication). This particular truss was a 168 foot long steel Camelback truss bridge fabricated by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company of Roanoke, Virginia. It had originally been built in 1916 to replace a covered bridge on the Valley Turnpike over the North Fork of the Shenandoah River one mile south of Mount Jackson. This crossing is one of the oldest in the Valley, having been once part of the colonial "Great Road" over which large numbers of German and Scotch-Irish farmers migrated into the Valley.

In 1934, the state had replaced the truss south of Mount Jackson with a cement bridge. The truss was broken down into its nine panels by chiselling off the rivet heads and then put in storage (Brock 1990: personal communication). In 1936, the condemned covered bridge near Quicksburg was removed and the steel Camelback truss was moved to the site. The truss was 16 feet shorter than needed to span the distance between the abutments. Therefore plans to modify the truss were drawn up in accordance with Virginia Department of Highway Bridge Specifications of 1932. These plans called for two new panels, each 17 feet 10 inches long or 35 feet 8 inches combined, to be fabricated to replace the existing center panel in order to lengthen the truss to the required 185 feet (see Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Highways Plan and Profile included). The coursed ashlar limestone abutments were reinforced with steel dowels and remodelled with 7 cubic yards of concrete and fitted with roller assemblies to accept the truss. At that time, 460 pounds of reinforcing steel was added to the substructure and a new floor requiring 13,944 board feet measure of untreated 4 by 6 inch white oak was installed. All old steel was scraped clean and bare spots were touched up with red lead and oil prior to painting. The estimated cost of erection at the time the plans were drawn up was \$6,400 to \$7,000.

The total length of the bridge is 189 feet. It is an average of 23 feet above the river bed. The truss is composed of various standardized steel beams, channels and plates which have been riveted or bolted together. Rigid connections are formed where chord members, post angles, and diagonals intersect and are riveted to gusset plates. It weighs approximately 72 tons and is 17 feet 3 inches wide. The roadway itself is 15 feet 1 inch wide with a height clearance of 13 feet and is limited to 15 ton trucks. The Camelback truss was generally used for spans of the greatest length (Diebler 1975: II 10) Going inward from the ends of the truss, the upper chords incline until the highest plane is reached on the top chords of the two center panels. This "hump" in the middle is a distinguishing feature of the Camelback truss and provides the maximum support for live and dead loads in the center, normally the weakest area in a span. The truss demonstrates one of the final, lean efficient forms attained by builders of metal bridges.

History of the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company

The information in the following discussion of the history of the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company is taken from Rockingham County Bridge Number 98 / State Route 1761 Bridge / Pittsylvania County Bridge Number 6906 / State Route 880 Bridge / Berry Hill Bridge / State Line Bridge; Historic American Engineering Record Number NC-38 prepared by Craig Lukezic.

The Shenandoah River Bridge was manufactured by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company of Roanoke, Virginia. This company, known in the Roanoke area as "the Bridge Works," was the largest fabricator of steel structures south of Pittsburgh and played a major role in Roanoke's economic development (Lukezic 1989: 11). It was one of three bridge companies located in Roanoke in the first quarter of the twentieth century. One of the two others, the Atlantic Bridge Company, is reported to have been strictly a truss erector, not at all involved in designing or fabrication. The other, Roanoke Bridge Company, built a number of truss bridges in Virginia's western counties.

The Virginia Bridge and Iron Company was incorporated in 1895 in the City of Roanoke, Virginia. This company was the result of the financial reorganization of the American Bridge Company which had been established only six years before. The American Bridge Company may have had ties to the New Jersey Bridge and Iron Company, founded in 1861, which in turn was linked to the Delaware Manufacturing Company of 1837 (Kessler 1989: personal communication). In 1895, when the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company was incorporated, the plant consisted of a small foundry which employed between 50 to 70 men and retained a value of \$50,000 (Jack and Jacobs 1912).

The economic base of the City of Roanoke had been primarily built on capital transplanted from the northern industrial region. However, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company boasted of being a local company founded on independent, local capital. Six of the officers involved in the reorganization and incorporation of the company: Tipton T. Fishburne, Rueben H. Fishburne, J. B. Fishburne, W. E. Robertson, W. B. Bevil, and E. L. Stone, were from western Virginia. Most of the officers were involved in many local businesses. As an example, the Fishburne brothers began in tobacco and expanded their interests into industry and banking. Tipton Fishburne was vice-president of the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company, vice-president of the Stone Printing Company, and president of both the Twin Mill Corporation and the Roanoke Hospital Association. The seventh officer, Charles Edwin Michael, moved from Maryland in 1889 when the American Bridge Company was begun. In 1892 he became that company's secretary

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treasurer, a position he retained throughout the reorganization of the company in 1895. He was later elected and remained vice-president and general manager until 1904, when he became president of the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company, a position he held until the depression.

Initially the company constructed light highway bridges and steel structures but soon expanded and diversified. By 1904, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company's plant occupied 10 1/2 acres and contained bridge, girder, and machine shops, as well as a new office building. The company had acquired late model equipment, which included air compressors for pneumatic hand riveters, cranes and lifts, and lathes, punching, riveting, sawing, and milling machines powered by 100 horse power engines. At this time, the company employed 175 men in the shop, and 150 in the field to perform erections. The annual output was approximately 12,000 tons of steel. Aside from bridges, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company was engaged to assemble turntables, factories, warehouses, and other steel structures throughout the southeast. Notable projects included the Norfolk and Western Railway shops at Portland, Ohio, and rolling mills for the Knoxville Iron Company (Isaacs 1904: 36-7).

By 1907, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company controlled capital of \$550,000 and was considered a success story by the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce. The company increased the size of its plant with the addition a girder shop equipped with heavy cranes and some new fire-proof shops. The work force grew from 300 to 450 employees with night shifts becoming common. Branches were established in Atlanta, Georgia and Little Rock, Arkansas, and a shop was opened in Burlington, North Carolina which employed 175 people (Jacobs 1907: 15 - 16). One year later, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company constructed a major plant in Memphis, Tennessee.

The company's central office continued to be located at the Roanoke plant. In 1910, 100 people were employed in the central office as executives, engineers, draftsmen, and stenographers, while 600 men worked in the shops producing 45,000 to 100,000 tons of steel products each year. Heavy railroad bridges became the primary product and were sold to major railroad lines throughout the American south and southwest, and Mexico. Steel railroad cars were also produced in quantity, 3,000 in the year 1910 alone. The company continued to grow throughout the decade. Although it concentrated on the southeast, it succeeded in establishing itself as a producer throughout the country. With the coming of World War I, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company fabricated steel for mercantile shipping. In 1922 a new plant was built in Birmingham, Alabama.

An undated advertising pamphlet published by the company sometime in the 1920's listed among the company's projects: a truss bridge for the Norfolk and Western Railroad across the Shenandoah River at Riverton Junction comprised of four 150 foot long spans with plate girder approaches; a 150 foot, 240 ton, truss bridge with a 45 foot skew for Norfolk and Western Railroad near Roanoke, Virginia; the Jefferson Savings Bank Building in Birmingham, Alabama and The Cotton Exchange Building in Memphis, Tennessee, each of which required over 3,000 tons of steel; a 160 foot span lift bridge for the Missouri Pacific Railway over the L'Aungville River at Marianna, Arkansas based on a Waddell and Harrington patent; a lift bridge for the Florida East Coast Railway at Fort Lauderdale, Florida based on a Straus Bascule Bridge Company patent; a 275 foot span Camelback truss for the San Antonio and Arkansas Pass Railway over the Colorado River at Yoakum, Texas; the Virginian Railway Falling Creek Viaduct near Roanoke; a 200,000 gallon water tower for the Norfolk and Western Railway, and a coal pier at

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Lambert Point, Norfolk, Virginia for the Norfolk and Western Railway. This coal pier was the largest coal pier constructed up to that time in the United States. It was 1,400 feet long, 90 feet high and required 8,000 tons of steel. It had a capacity of 4,000 tons an hour (Virginia Bridge and Iron Company). By 1934, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company was the third largest steel fabricating company in the United States with plants in New York, New Orleans, El Paso, and Dallas. It was awarded a Federal Government contract to fabricate four drums for the Panama Canal (Roanoke Times 1934).

World War II was a time of increased heavy production loads for the firm. The bridge works produced the buildings, cranes and dry docks for the United States Navy when it upgraded its facilities at Norfolk. Other major projects included a new bakery structure for the National Biscuit Company, and the Sugarbowl and Orangebowl Stadiums. In 1942, the company produced \$10,000,000 worth of product and maintained 1,800 people on the payroll (Writers' Program: 204).

In 1951, for reasons not found in the research of this company, the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company merged with U. S. Steel and became part of the American Bridge Company division. In the following years, probably due to ongoing changes in technology, markets, and competition within the industry, all of the production facilities started up under the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company shut down. The last closed in the 1960's during a period of labor unrest (Kessler 1989: personal communication).

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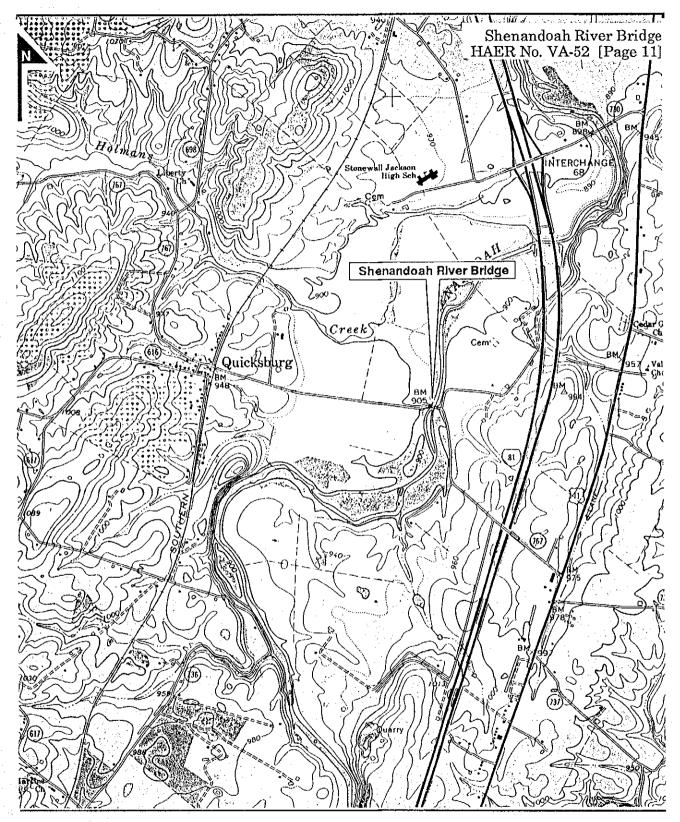
Personal Communication

1990

John Brock

1989

William Kessler



Location of Shenandoah River Bridge near the town of Quicksburg Source: USGS 7.5' New Market, VA Quadrangle, 1967

0 1000' 2000' 3000' 5000' 7000'

APPENDIX A

Plans for the Reconstruction of the Shenandoah River Bridge on Route 767 in Shenandoah County, Virginia.

May 25, 1935

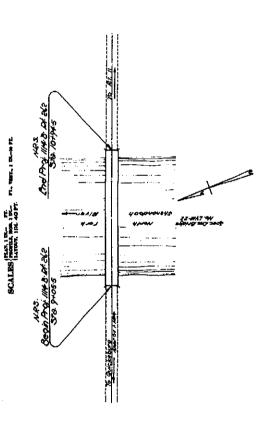
Microfilms of Originals on file at
Virginia Department of Historic Resources



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

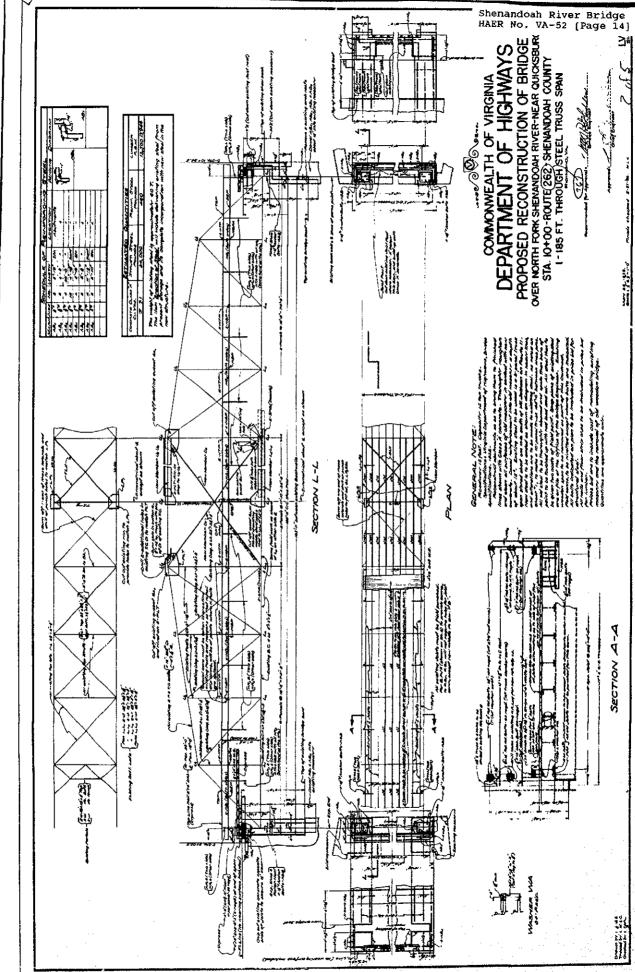
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

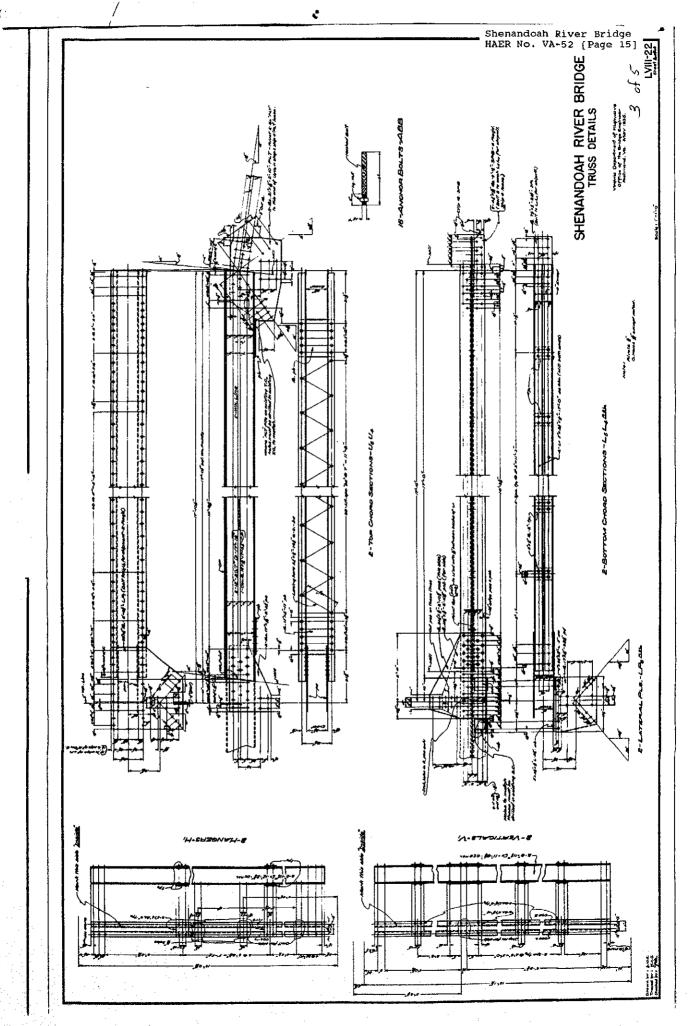
PLAN AND PROFILE OF PROPOSED STATE HIGHWAY SHENANDOAH COUNTY
PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE
OVER NORTH FORK SHENANDOAH RIVER-NEAR QUICKSBURG



CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

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